



WGC says Canadian Talent Pool at Risk with Imbalance in Treaty Co-productions

For Immediate Release – Toronto – March 23, 2011 – Researching the co-production landscape in Canada, the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) found proof of what it has long suspected – that there is a severe imbalance between majority and minority co-productions of TV drama. In its submission today to the Government of Canada’s Consultation on the Implementation of Canada’s Policy on Audiovisual Treaty Co-production, the WGC called on the Canadian government to strengthen the domestic film and TV production industry by enforcing the goal of balance between productions in which Canada is a majority partner and those in which we play a minority role. The current imbalance has far-reaching negative effects on the job opportunities in film and TV, the Canadian content available to Canadians, and the domestic talent pool.

The WGC noted that for TV drama, in each of the last two years, there have been just one or two majority co-productions to four or five minority co-productions. And current tracking tell us the situation is only worsening. Such high-cost minority co-productions divert scarce financial resources that might otherwise be directed at high-employment, domestic drama production.

WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker says “making Canada a co-production partner of choice is a laudable goal – but to create jobs and opportunity for Canadian talent, we also need to be a majority partner at least half of the time. If most of what we’re seeing is the 20% side in minority co-productions, we’re playing in the minor leagues. We understand it is difficult to raise financing, but to truly build something for everyone in the industry we need an equal number of majority co-productions in key areas like TV drama. Majority co-productions will employ more Canadians in higher-paying positions, and may also give Canadian audiences some stories they can relate to - not just European costume dramas.”

Because minority co-productions – shows like *The Tudors*, *The Borgias*, *Camelot*, *Pillars of the Earth* and the recently announced *Titanic*– technically qualify as Canadian content, these shows also take up the very limited space broadcasters allot to Canadian programming in their schedules. Excessive minority co-productions have in the last few years made it harder and harder for Canadians to find truly Canadian productions in prime time.

The WGC has asked the Department of Canadian Heritage to require Telefilm to enforce the principle of balance in TV drama co-productions to ensure a healthy industry in Canada for all of us. To read the WGC submission, visit www.wgc.ca.

For more information, please contact David Kinahan, Writers Guild of Canada, at d.kinahan@wgc.ca

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 2,000 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the creators who write the Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens and digital platforms.